

Letter from Alexander Melville Bell to Alexander Graham Bell, April 18, 1879

Tutelo Heights, Brantford, Ont., Canada, April 18, 79. (Prof. A. Graham Bell, 1509 Rhode Island Ave., Washington, D. C. U. S.) My dear Al.,

My previous letter should have better informed you of our position here. We are compelled to act on the defensive as well as to take action against infringers. Our lessees are threatened with actions for damages, and one action has been already commenced. I had to assume the defensive in this case, and unless I could promise to guarantee other lessees against loss we should get no one to risk using our telephones. The Dominion Telegraph Co. would not undertake the agency without a similar guarantee, and a clause in our agreement binds me to protect them against any actions that may be raised against them for infringement on other patents by the use of the Bell Telephones. If your case turns out well I shall be safe; if otherwise—We have not yet got one of the carbon transmitters, although we have written for them time after time, and our Hamilton Agent can wait no longer. He says he will be obliged to get the Edison instruments if we cannot supply him immediately. Send on the specifications for your new instruments as soon as possible and we will get some made. You should of course patent it in Canada. I should do so, but that I believe an application for a patent must come from the inventor. I suppose from what you wrote of paying us a short visit soon, that you will come with Mary at the end of next week. I shall defer issuing the circulars until we have an opportunity of going over them together. We are busy preparing a new room to accommodate you more comfortably when you come with Mabel to pay us a long visit. You will find us all in a mess just now but we shall be ready for you in June or any time thereafter. Love from Mamma and all to self, Mabel, Elsie and all.

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Your affectionate father, Alex. Melville Bell.